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As omicron surges:

Teachers, students resist unsafe schools

By Greg Butterfield

Members of the Chicago Teachers Union voted to take classes remote for several days in defiance of the city administration. Thousands of New York City students walked out of classes to protest unsafe conditions. Furious staff, youth and families from Oakland, California, to Columbia, Missouri, and Boston are demanding the return of remote learning options, increased testing and safety measures in schools.

We all remember Donald Trump's racist, antiimmigrant slogan, "Build that wall." Now the Biden administration and its allies in the corporate media have "built a wall" of dangerous denial around the spread of COVID-19's omicron variant in public schools across the U.S. And teachers, school staff, students and families are fighting

Along with healthcare and retail workers, school workers and students have been on the frontlines of the pandemic since early 2020 - never more so than today. Crammed into overcrowded classrooms without adequate ventilation, testing or PPE, schools are omicron superspreaders – ones that federal, state and local officials insist remain open despite all evidence to the contrary. Why?

Advocates for keeping schools open and denying a remote option cite "learning loss" as their primary reason. But in cities like New York, home of the country's largest public school system, so many thousands of students and teachers are sick that little learning is going on in most classrooms. In many schools, students who come in are packed into even more dangerous conditions like auditoriums and lunchrooms – because so many peers and staff members are out sick.

As enraged teachers and students have been saying for weeks, most want to teach and learn in a classroom environment. But that can only happen when it is safe to do so. Withholding remote options and safety measures during a pandemic surge is the greatest source of "learning loss" as parents keep their children home and many students and teachers fall ill.

Childhood infections and hospitalizations have skyrocketed since mid-December. Omicron is a variant of COVID-19 that is highly transmissible and often results in "breakthrough cases" among those who are already vaccinated. But offi-

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cials have only gotten more dug in about keeping schools open, without any remote option.

It's not just pro-Trump anti-maskers who are responsible. Some of the worst offenders are Democratic allies of the Biden administration, including incoming New York Mayor Eric Adams and his predecessor, Bill de Blasio, and Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot, who locked teachers out of their remote classrooms.

The real reason – which is becoming clearer to more and more workers – is that the capitalist economy demands it. Profit-hungry capitalists find their businesses short staffed. Keeping schools open is a way to force parents to come to work, often in unsafe conditions. The health of the community - including elders, people with chronic illnesses, and younger children who have not yet been approved for vaccination - is not a priority for the capitalists and their bought-andpaid-for politicians.

Baltimore: a case study

Baltimore, a predominantly Black city, is a case study in what is happening around the country, including larger cities like Chicago and New York.

The school superintendent and Democratic city administration refused to heed the Baltimore Teachers Union, which asked them to act preemptively to protect teachers, students and the community before the scheduled return to class-

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MLK Day organizers say 'NO COPS in commemoration'

By John Parker

Los Angeles – The Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice, Martin Luther King Coalition, Unión del Barrio, the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) Movement, Coalition to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal, South Central Tenants Union, Puerto Rican Alliance, BAYAN USA, Harvard Boulevard Block Club and Socialist Unity Party are just a few of the organizations supporting this year's MLK March for Social Justice. Because of the recent COVID surge, this year's event will take the form of a car caravan.

Many of these groups were part of the news conference Dec. 30 announcing the caravan on the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, Monday, Jan. 17. The enthusiasm felt from the organizations at the media event comes from this being the first time in over three decades that the MLK events will exclude the police and not disrespect the legacy of Dr. King.

In addition, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. military organizations are not invited to have contingents or any repre-

Many in South Central, where the MLK Parade occurs, see the recent killing of 14-year-old Valentina Orellana-Peralta, a recent immigrant from Chile, as yet another horrible reminder of the terror created by the police forces against the predominantly Black and Brown community. Her

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Workers organize and strike to fight pandemic and capitalist inflation

By Gary Wilson

The COVID-19 pandemic continues as the new year begins, spreading faster with the omicron variant. Average daily infections in the U.S. are over 500,000. Total deaths are approaching 1 million. The coronavirus is now the top killer of adults ages 25 to 44 in the U.S., reports the Journal of the American Medical Association.

"For years, the number-one cause of death in my age group [25 to 44] was not cancer or heart disease but accidents, followed closely by drug overdoses and suicide," says Dr. F. Perry Wilson of the Yale School of Medicine. "COVID-19 changed that."

The pandemic's deadly impact is the result of capitalist governments putting profits before people's lives. It doesn't have to be this way. Look at China. Since the beginning of the pandemic, only 4,849 COVID deaths have occurred in China.

In the U.S., while the working class was suffering and dying in the pandemic, Wall Street was booming.

"Global stock and bond markets never had it so good," reports economist Michael Roberts. "Central bank-financed credit flooded into financial assets like there was no tomorrow.

"The result has been a staggering rise in financial asset prices (stocks and bonds) and in real estate. Central banks have injected \$32 trillion into financial markets since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, lifting global stock market capitalization by \$60 trillion.

"And companies worldwide raised \$12.1 trillion by selling stock and taking out loans as a result. The U.S. stock market index rose 17% in 2021, repeating a similar rise in 2020. The S&P 500 index reached a record high. The Nikkei 225 Index had its highest annual gains since 1989.

"But as we go into 2022, the days of 'easy money' and cheap loans are coming to an end. The huge stock market boom of the last two years looks likely to peter out," Roberts explains.

"So this year could be the one for a financial crash or at least a severe correction in stock market and bond prices, as interest rates rise, eventually driving a layer of zombie corporations into bankruptcy.

"This is what central banks fear. That is why most are being very cautious about ending the era of easy money. And yet they are being driven to do so because of the sharp rise in the inflation rates of prices of goods and services in many major economies," concludes Roberts.

Inflation is for profits

What about inflation? Workers can't have prices rising faster than their wages and benefits.

The big business-controlled media reports about inflation, however, are meant to boost corporate profits.

What needs to be looked at economically is the state of wages. Are wages keeping up with rising prices? Over the last two years of the pandemic, inflation has been relatively low but wages have been stagnant. That means that wages have been kept at poverty levels or even have been going down.

Inflation is rising now, but that's because businesses are raising prices, which has resulted in record prof-

What's needed is not a focus on inflation but a focus on wages.

Karl Marx led a battle in Britain for raising workers' wages. Marx pointed out that wage rises do not cause price rises (inflation is price increases, not wage increases). As Marx put it in "Value, Price and Profit," when he debated with trade unionist John Weston, who argued that wage rises would cause inflation:

"Firstly. A general rise in the rate of wages would result in a fall of the general rate of profit, but, broadly speaking, not affect the prices of commodities.

"Secondly. The general tendency of capitalist production is not to raise, but to sink the average standard of wages.

"Thirdly. Trades unions work well



as centers of resistance against the encroachments of capital."

Prices are not driven by wages. Gas prices are soaring, but no one can say that's because petroleum workers are being paid that much more (they aren't). In fact, according to Oilman Magazine, some 107,000 jobs "vanished" from the U.S. oil, gas and chemicals industry during the last two years.

So wages are not driving up gas prices. Profit-gouging is.

Labor unions fight

Yes, labor unions have been cen-

tral to the fight for better wages and working conditions. 2021 was a year of strikes, unionization efforts and worker mobilizations.

Low-wage workers suffered disproportionately during the pandemic and are demanding increased wages, sick pay, meal and rest breaks, better benefits and shorter shifts.

As the new Omicron strain spreads quickly across the United States, threatening to draw the pandemic out even longer, workers organizing and fighting back is the only way forward out of the crisis.







From the left: John Parker, former Black

Panther Harold Welton, rap artist Noname.

58 years of unjust imprisonment Free Ruchell Mage

By John Parker

The Free Ruchell Magee Coalition held a rally on Dec. 18 in front of the CNN building in Los Angeles. They demanded that the powers that be including the governor and corporate media – stop ignoring the case of extreme racism in sentencing and denial of human rights to Ruchell "Cinque" Magee.

Magee, who is now 82 and under medical care, has suffered incarceration for 58 years. He was given a life sentence for an alleged \$10 robbery. Later in 1970, Magee was involved with Jonathon Jackon in the attempt to free political prisoner George Jackson, after eight years of not being allowed parole or any acknowledgement of the racist sentencing and trial.

Participants in Saturday's rally included the Party for Socialism and Liberation, the Socialist Unity Party and the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice. Harold Welton, former Black Panther and organizer of the monthly Black Panther Party Breakfasts, spoke at the event. He has been the main organizer in Los Angeles for the freedom of Ruchell Magee.

A petition demanding the release of Magee says: "As an elder, he faces constant mental and physical health risks every day from nearly six decades of incarceration. With the COVID-19 pandemic raging across California's prisons throughout 2020 and 2021, Ruchell has been in significant danger of falling ill."

Blaming the victims: The Bronx fire tragedy wasn't an accident

By Stephen Millies

Seventeen people died in the Jan. 9 apartment building fire that broke out in the Bronx, New York. Eight of those killed were chil-

Ousmane Konteh was just 2 years old when he perished. Haouwa Mahamadou was 5 when she died. Some survivors are fighting for their lives in hospitals.

The fire broke out in the 19-story Twin Parks North West tower at 333 E. 181st St. Many of the victims belonged to immigrant families from the West African country of Gambia. Families with roots in the Dominican Republic were also residents.

The country of Gambia was used by the British Empire as a source of enslaved Africans and then as a peanut plantation. Gambia and all Africans deserve reparations.

The entire Dukuray family perished. They were the mother Fatoumata, the father Haji, 12-year-old Mustapha, 11-year-old Miriam and 5-year-old Fatoumata.

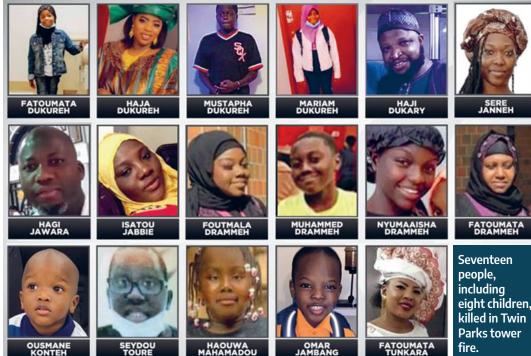
Four members of the Drammeh family lost their lives. Muhammad Drammeh was killed one day after his 12th birthday. He died along with his mother, Fatoumata Drammeh, and his two sisters, Fatoumala Drammeh and Nyumaaisha Drammeh.

Fatoumata Tunkara died with her 6-year-old son Omar Jambang. Isatou Jabbie, Sera Janneh, Hagi Jawara and 12-year-old Seydou Toure perished.

The fire apparently started when an electrical space heater plugged into an outlet caught fire. Families are forced to use space heaters because landlords don't provide enough heat. That's a crime.

Toxic smoke rose rapidly from a third-floor apartment, filling halls and stairways with poison. All of the people who died were killed by smoke inhalation.

The Twin Parks tower wasn't ancient. It was built in 1972. Yet it didn't have sprinklers or exterior fire escapes.



Lethal smoke rose in the tower because it's lighter than air. More modern buildings raise the air pressure in the stairwells to keep out smoke. The newer structures also equip stairwells with dampers.

So why didn't the Twin Parks tower have these life-saving features? It's because the building was privately owned and making it safe would cut into the landlords' profits. Many of the tenants paid their rent with Section 8 vouchers.

One of the owners is Rick Gropper, co-founder of the Camber Property Group. The outfit bought Twin Parks in 2020 with other companies as part of a \$166-million, eight-building deal. Gropper likes to pick up properties like Twin Parks with Section 8 tenants because it offers tax breaks.

So what is Rick Gropper doing on newly-elected New York City Mayor Eric Adams' transition team for housing issues?

They didn't have to die

Following the tragedy, people throughout the New York City area and across the country have responded with sympathy and love. They have raised close to a million dollars for the families at the Twin Parks tower.

Meanwhile, Mayor Adams and television commentators initially gave lectures on the importance of closing doors if your apartment catches fire. The clear implication of the media barrage was to blame victims for their own deaths.

Adams did admit that "there may have been a maintenance issue with this door." A year after a 2017 Bronx fire that killed 12 people, the city council passed a law ordering self-closing doors to be installed in all buildings by mid-2021.

The mayor even questioned the need for tenants to have space heaters, contending there were no outstanding heating complaints at the Twin Parks tower. There were actually four heating complaints filed by the tenants last year with the Department of Housing Preservation and Development.

Thousands of tenants in New York, including those living in New York Housing Authority buildings, are forced to have space heaters or boil water on their stoves to keep warm.

Another problem was that fire alarms would go off many times without cause, leading residents to ignore them. All these problems

could have been fixed so 17 people didn't have to die.

But that would have meant hiring more maintenance workers and cutting into Rick Gropper's profits. Gropper may think of himself as a liberal who attends charity balls. But owning apartment houses for profit is a dangerous practice, just like privately owned nursing homes where tens of thousands have died of COVID.

Just to break even and pay the mortgage, landlords will have to cut back on repairs and maintenance workers. The result is a lack of heat, doors that don't close and increased risk of fires.

Close to two hundred people marched on "billionaires' row" in midtown Manhattan's 57th Street on Jan. 12 to protest the

ending of the New York statewide ban on evictions.

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul wants to celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday this year by ending the moratorium on Jan. 15. Hochul said kind words for those who died in the Bronx, but sees nothing wrong with 250,000 families facing eviction in the middle of winter.

Marchers not only called out the governor, they also went to the headquarters of mega-landlords like LeFrak and BlackRock and condemned their crimes. People chanted in memory of the "Bronx 17."

Housing is a human right. The power of the people will make it



SLL PHOTO: STEPHEN MILLIES

March against evictions on Manhattan's "billionaires' row," Jan. 12.

Stop winter evictions!

By Stephen Millies

Jan. 8 – A hundred people marched today in New York City in sub-freezing temperatures to stop evictions. Landlords across New York State want to kick 250,000 families out of their homes.

People gathered at Brooklyn's housing court at 141 Livingston St. Tenants find little justice there. Officials are often just rubber stamps for the landlords.

"Housing is a human right, fight, fight, fight!" was a favorite chant. Speakers pointed out the impossibility of finding affordable housing in the capital of capitalism. Over half of the tenants in New York City pay half of their income for rent.

The current moratorium on evictions ends on Jan. 15. Landlords want to use Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday to start throwing families' furniture on the street.

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul doesn't want to extend the moratorium. It was only because millions of people were in the street demanding Black Lives Matter that there was any ban on evictions during the pandemic.

Marchers demanded the moratorium be extended until June 30.

After a short rally, people marched to 26 Court St., home of some of the landlords' favorite law firms. People then went over the Brooklyn Bridge with their colorful banners to Manhattan's housing court.

Among the organizations that came out today were the Crown Heights Tenant Union, Democratic Socialists of America, the Party for Socialism and Liberation and the Socialist Unity Party.



SLL PHOTOS: STEPHEN MILLIES

Some 250,000 New York City families face eviction.

The CHTU is joining other groups in calling for a "march on billionaires' row" on Jan. 12 at 6 p.m. at 57th Street and Broadway in Manhattan.

Kicking people out of their homes in the winter can be a death sentence. Every attempted eviction has to be stopped. 🔟

Time to organize for workers' power Amazon workers have a right to a union

By Sharon Black

The recent National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) nationwide settlement that forces Amazon to notify workers of their rights to organize for union representation is a victory for Amazon workers and all workers.

This decision orders Amazon to email approximately 750,000 workers describing their specific rights to organize for a union. In addition, according to the settlement, Amazon is not to threaten workers with disciengage in union activity.

The company must also post the notice in prominent places in its fulfillment centers, sortation centers and delivery stations. Amazon must publish information on the news alert page of its "A to Z" app for workers and on its website.

You can read the entire agreement at: Tinyurl.com/2p834xmh.

The credit for this decision squarely rests on the shoulders of the courageous workers from Chicago, Staten Island, New York, and Bessemer,



pline or call the police when they Baltimore rally and news conference Jan. 4 to support Amazon workers.

Alabama. They not only filed charges but expressed themselves through work actions and protests.

Can workers use this moment to push forward to organize?

A former Amazon worker, Steven Ceci, stated: "This could be an important moment. The present labor shortage, due not just to the so-called 'big resignation' but to the omicron crisis – together with this NLRB decision – can ignite the movement for union rights and workers' power."

Baltimore Amazon workers press forward

Inspired by Bessemer, Staten Island and Chicago Amazon warehouse workers, Baltimore workers spoke out at a Jan. 4 rally and press conference to support Amazon workers and demand that trillionaire boss Jeff Bezos keep his "hands off workers' right to unionize."

Baltimore Amazon workers recounted unsafe conditions in the warehouse, unresponsive management, poor and unpaid

wages, and the need for a union. The Unemployed Workers Union, Peoples Power Assembly and Seniors United vowed community support for their organizing efforts.

Warehouse workers shared this most recent message from Amazon management that cut paid time for COVID illness in half: "After reviewing the newly released guidance from the CDC, we are updating Amazon's COVID-19 isolation and quarantine policy to one week (seven calendar days) from when you took the test, with up to 40 hours paid leave."

From Walmart to Amazon, workers have seen sick pay cut as their billionaire bosses jump on the recent Centers for Disease Control (CDC) "miss-guidelines" that force COVID-infected workers back to work after just five days – a move that jeopardizes the health of workers and threatens community safety.

Andre Powell, a PPA organizer, described how a relative who works at Amazon is seriously ill with COVID and cannot work, and may end up fired and without money to support their children.

While some workers may recover quickly, many do not. Therefore, the community rally demanded that all workers have a right to full sick pay for the entire duration of the illness, regardless of time; no reprisals or firings for lost time; and COVID testing on the job, including negative tests to return to work.

The writer is a former Baltimore warehouse worker (BWI2) and author of the pamphlet "Amazon Worker Tells All, which can be downloaded free at Struggle-La-Lucha.org.

Brooklyn, N.Y., teachers demand 'Safety not swagger'

By Greg Butterfield

Around 100 teachers, students and parents rallied at the Barclays Center sports arena in downtown Brooklyn, New York, Jan. 5 to demand real health and safety protections for public school communities throughout New York City. The action was organized by the Movement of Rank and File Educators (MORE-UFT), a progressive faction of the United Federation of Teachers.

Signs and banners alerted onlookers that "NYC schools are not safe!" MORE-UFT activist Annie Tan, a special education teacher in Brooklyn's Sunset Park neighborhood, led chants of "Who keeps us safe? We keep us safe!"

Speakers condemned the new cop Eric Adams and his predecessor Bill de Blasio for denying students and teachers a remote learning option during the surging COVID-19 omicron variant sweeping the city.

Before the December holiday break, omicron was spreading rapidly through city schools. Both the outgoing and incoming Democratic administrations refused to take measures to ensure the safety of school communities upon the resumption of classes on Jan. 3, and rejected numerous calls to postpone in-person classes to give time for all students and workers to be tested.

community members told horror stories from their own schools: sick children being sent to classes due to lack of testing and the Department of Education's lack of communication with non-English-speaking parents; high numbers of teacher absences meaning students are crammed into auditoriums, further heightening the risk mayoral administration of former of spread; illness of food preparation workers leaving teachers scrambling to feed lunch to hungry kids.

Mayor Adams boasted of "New York swagger" as a reason to force students and teachers back into the school petrie dish. A sign held high by an African American teacher at the Jan. 5 rally responded succinctly: "Safety not swagger."

Unfortunately, UFT President Michael Mulgrew has been collaborating with the city administration in covering up the extent of the crisis and refusing to listen to the demands of the union's members and the broader school community.

MORE-UFT members held a follow-up action at UFT headquarters on Jan. 10, demanding action from the union leadership.

MORE-UFT demands include: KN95 or N95 for students, faculty and staff; weekly testing for all staff shared; repair or replace insufficient ventilation systems; student schools safe." 🔟



absences excused if parents choose to keep children home during the surge; and remote learning options.

New York residents are urged to call the city's information hotline 311 and say: "I am very concerned about COVID safety in NYC public schools. and students, and result data to be I believe weekly testing of all staff and students is the only way to keep

As omicron surges:

Teachers, students resist unsafe schools

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rooms following the year-end holiday break.

On Dec. 22, BTU President Diamonte Brown said: "There is much we do not yet know, but what is clear is that transmissions are at record levels and vaccination does not eliminate infection. It is prudent and necessary for City Schools to consider all possibilities.

"However, there have only been minimal changes to the status quo and we have not heard of any contingency plans that could be enacted if circumstances continue to worsen."

course of action and preparation, calling on the city to open the winter session remotely and delay in-person schooling while testing and safety measures are put in place.

Instead, the Baltimore City officials plowed forward with reopening, with no plan, minimal testing and resulting chaos.

Baltimore activist Sharon Black of the Unemployed Workers Union told Struggle-La Lucha: "The community is outraged. It's been up to teachers to raise money to provide N95 and KN95 masks, and not a thing has

The union quickly laid out a clear been discussed in terms of safety on buses at school rush hour - either for drivers or students."

The School Board and Baltimore City Health Department claim they will have testing in place and possibly completed by the end of January - after schools have already been back in session and spreading COVID for weeks. School staff have reiterated that many air filters and purifiers are in need of further maintenance.

"It is profits before people that is driving this criminal neglect of the health of young people and teach-

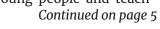




PHOTO: CUBA FN RESUMEN

Alicia Jrapko, presente!

By Gerardo Hernández Nordelo and Graciela Ramírez Cruz

Dear comrades and friends,

With deep sorrow and on behalf of her family, we announce that our dear colleague, sister and friend Alicia Jrapko passed away last evening after fighting a cruel illness for more than two years. In spite of the hard treatment, she never stopped working as much as she could. Alicia regretted not being able to continue contributing, loving and living with the energy that always characterized her.

Alicia was a great Argentine revolutionary, the daughter of workers who at a very young age took up the struggles of a generation that dreamed of building an Argentina with social justice for the people. Alicia once said in an interview: "In Latin America a great admiration was forged for Cuba, for Fidel, Raul, Che and so many other revolutionaries. In Argentina we wanted the same thing, but it was not achieved and a great part of my generation lost their best children."

Alicia was born on January 1, 1953, in Merlo, Buenos Aires province, grew up and was educated in Córdoba, where she studied journalism. Argentina's military dictatorship imposed in 1976 unleashed a fierce repression against all popular militants. Thirty thousand were detained-disappeared, among them many of Alicia's classmates. She was unable to finish her degree, and with the clothes she was wearing, in the same year she had to go into exile.

Each of Alicia's three children bear the middle names of her disappeared comrades: Gabriela Emma, Eileen Mabel and Juan Alberto.

For several years she lived in exile in Mexico, then settled in the United States, the most difficult country and at the same time the most necessary to support the causes of Latin America and fight against imperialism ... it was difficult for her to understand the aggression, the lies and the attacks against Cuba by the media and the government.

Alicia became committed to the struggles of U.S. workers and starting in the early 1990s to Cuba solidarity work through IFCO-Pastors for Peace, where she worked closely with Rev. Lucius Walker as his West Coast coordinator and helped organize and recruit African American and Latino students to attend the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM) for free to become doctors in their communities. Her solidarity work brought her closer to Cuba every day; she became a spokesperson for many caravans of Pastors traveling thousands of miles through the U.S. to counter the lies of the U.S. government against the revolutionary island while collecting humanitarian aid as a symbol of solidarity with the Cuban people. "We knew that the humanitarian



aid we were taking to Cuba was symbolic, but we wanted to show that the U.S. government could not block solidarity between peoples. And we wanted to show that Cuba was not alone. The experience of traveling to Cuba on Pastors for Peace caravans changed my life forever and brought me closer to Cuba and its people."

In 2000 Alicia was in the forefront of the battle for the return of Elian Gonzalez to his father in Cuba, but her pivotal work can be found in the struggle to free the Cuban Five political prisoners, unjustly incarcerated for monitoring the activity of terrorists in the U.S. against Cuba. Alicia assumed with determination and incomparable courage the leadership of the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five in the United States, and managed to get trade unionists, religious leaders, congressional representatives, jurists, intellectuals, actors and artists to join the campaign for the release of Cuban anti-terrorist fighters Gerardo Hernandez Nordelo, Ramon Labañino Salazar, Antonio Guerrero Rodriguez, Fernando Gonzalez Llort and Rene Gonzalez Sehwerert.

From 2002 until his release in 2014, regardless of the risks and the enormous distances, together with her partner in struggle and dreams, Bill Hackwell, she visited Gerardo Hernandez more than a hundred times in two maximum security federal penitentiaries, and was the constant and affectionate supporter of family visits.

Alicia's enormous work and political commitment transcended before the Cuban people who conferred her several distinctions, among them

the Felix Elmuza Medal awarded by the Union of Journalists of Cuba, the Shield of the city of Holguin and the Medal of Friendship awarded by the Council of State of the Republic of Cuba through the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), for her immense work during the long years of struggle for the freedom of the Five.

Pages would not be enough to describe the enormous work that this courageous woman carried out with extraordinary modesty, simplicity, dignity and fidelity, with all her energies placed at the service of human betterment throughout her precious life.

Alicia's work focused on Latin America including the defense of the Bolivarian Revolution of Venezuela and she was also a visible presence in the antiwar movement to end the U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Since 2011 Alicia has been a co-chair of the National Network on Cuba (NNOC). She was the coordinator of the International Committee for Peace, Justice and Dignity for the Peoples in the U.S., and founder and co-editor of Resumen Latinoamericano in English. She created the U.S. chapter of the Network in Defense of Humanity and was a member of its General Secretariat. In her last project, despite being ill, Alicia was the co-chair of the Nobel Committee for Cuba's Henry Reeve medical brigade, in one more effort in her tireless fight against the criminal blockade

Her name, Alicia, is the essence of truth. That truth was carried as a banner by our dear Ali throughout her life, the truth of the people against injustice, the truth, honesty, dignity and modesty of true revolutionaries, capable of giving their all, without any other personal ambition or motive. Alicia's style of leadership pulled people to her and the struggle, always with her big smile and sincerity, earning her the respect of all.

She honored us with her friendship and affection, with her enormous courage. And she leaves us all in this infinite sadness, but she also leaves us with her example of how to live a life of struggle, nobility, dignity and hope.

All our love goes to Gabriela, Eileen and Juanito, her beloved children, her life partner Bill Hackwell, her six grandchildren, the youngest Che Simón, born this Jan. 5, whom she could not see or hold in her arms, but was able to listen to an audio of his cry for the future with a big smile; to her dear brother in Argentina, family, friends and colleagues in the United States.

We will never forget you, soul mate, dearest sister and mother.

Hasta Siempre Ali Querida! You will always be present! Until Victory Always!

The Movement of Rank and File Educators (MORE-UFT) in New York pointed out the Biden administration's hypocrisy, noting that on Jan. 2, as schools were about to resume in-person classes, the White House press briefing room was being reduced to only 14 seats due to concerns about

omicron. "Cool, cool, but 30 kids in a classroom is fine."

In truth, what we are seeing is Trump's vision of mass infection unimpeded by public health measures taking shape under Biden and the "anti-Trump" Democrats. Because the capitalist class demands it, and both Republicans and Democrats at bottom exist to serve their interests.

The more Biden, Adams, Lightfoot & Co. barrel ahead endangering the lives of workers and their children, the more resistance they will face, and the more people will become aware that neither Democrats or Republicans can be relied on to protect their most basic rights.

Only independent organization in the spirit of the rebellious Chicago teachers and New York students can defend the lives and health of the people!

The writer is the parent of two New York City public school students.

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ers. 'Get kids back to school, so parents can make money for bosses' is their motto," Black added.

Role of Biden and the CDC

The Biden administration has encouraged this dangerous behavior, with the president repeatedly saying that schools should remain open.

Biden's Centers for Disease Control issued new guidelines Dec. 27 cutting the quarantine period for infected people from 10 to 5 days, citing "societal impact (e.g., critical infrastructure and staffing shortages)" as a major reason.

Even former Surgeon General Jerome Adams, a Trump appointee, advised against following the new CDC guidance, saying people should get a negative test before leaving isolation. Adams called the change "a compromise to keep the economy open in the face of inadequate tests."

Shortly after the CDC altered its guidelines to benefit bosses at the expense of public health, it also issued a report that COVID infection may increase the danger of diabetes in children – a chronic, lifelong and potentially fatal condition that requires expensive maintenance drugs.

Gerardo Hernández Nordelo and Graciela Ramírez Cruz January 12, 2022, from Havana Source: Resumen Latinoamericano Los Angeles rally backs South Korean

workers' struggle

In Los Angeles Jan. 8, progressive Korean American groups and allies rallied in solidarity with the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) and against the U.S. military occupation of South Korea. The Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice and the Socialist Unity Party were among the participating organizations. The following remarks were made by Korean American activist Peter Kim at the rally,

By Peter Kim

The KCTU, the largest trade union organization in South Korea, is organizing a major demonstration in Seoul on Jan. 15 under the slogan, "Let's overthrow inequality through general unity with the people!"

We are gathered here today as we did last October to support the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions' unstoppable general strike. We are here again to endorse and support the Jan. 15 nationwide people's rally hosted by the KCTU.

The term of office of the Moon Jae In regime in South Korea is ending soon. Despite public opposition, this is the regime that just pardoned former President Park Geun Hye, allowing her to receive security after his term ends.

When he became president, Moon Jae In said he would create an era of zero temporary workers, but the numbers of temporary workers have increased while he's been in office. During

his campaign he promised to raise the minimum wage to \$8.30, but after five years it's still only \$7.60. With inflation, even \$10 isn't enough. Hard-working Koreans are suffering with low wages, long work hours and dangerous working conditions. They deserve better!

The chaebol [corporate monopolies] who committed these crimes are free and workers who gather to protest are arrested for violating COVID-19 prevention laws. The chaebol's in-house fund is about \$100 billion, but many workers and some young people end up wandering the streets due to low wages, soaring housing prices and unemployment.

There are too many broken promises from the Moon Jae In government. Using COVID-19 prevention as an excuse to lockdown the country,



he ended up putting small businesses out of business and blocking the workers' right to protest and assemble, causing many to lose not only their jobs but their livelihood.

Moon Jae In also talked about the peace process with North Korea, but did nothing to move those talks forward. Instead he spent an astronomical amount of money to import U.S. military weapons and support the U.S. military bases in Korea. He has not kept to his word in the last five years.

Sadly, there is no better option in the upcoming 2022 presidential election. Nobody talks about the workers and the welfare of the country, only about tax cuts for the wealthy and corporations.

PHOTOS: INSOOK LEE

Korean workers have had the highest suicide rate in the world for the past 16 years. The national birth rate is the lowest among 198 countries. The OECD ranks Korea second in the world in temporary workers, fourth in inequality and fifth in the youth unemployment rate. This is the reality of the world's 10th largest

For all of these reasons, workers and young people, we must unite and fight. Nothing will change if we don't stand up to the systematic inequality in South Korea. Let's organize for the struggling workers and create change. Let's unite with the KCTU's rally on Jan. 15, 2022.

Why Kazakhstan exploded

By Vladimir Chemeris

What is happening now in Kazakhstan, a popular uprising or another "color revolution"? At the moment, users of Ukrainian social networks are actively discussing this issue.

Despite all the differences, we are very similar in our social, economic and political systems - Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Georgia, Armenia, Russia, Belarus. After all, we all came out of one overcoat of the former USSR. That is why we rightly compare the crisis processes in our countries.

All "Maidans" - that is, largescale protests that have taken place in our countries - had different triggers, but they were always due to the same underlying social reasons. So many active people would not go out to protest merely for cookies.

The first Kazakh workers' Maidan took place in 2011 in the city of Zhanaozen, which is the epicenter of today's explosion. This also had social reasons.

There are deep contradictions between the capital that has merged with state power, on the one hand, and the mass of social groups exploited by it, on the other. These contradictions are the foundation of Maidans in all our countries.

With all the Maidans, there is a problem that arises objectively whether anyone wants it or not and it is that members of the ruling class use the situation to fulfill their own needs.

Maidans turn into color revolutions when the result is a change of the president's name without changing the conditions that gave



Striking workers in Kazakhstan.

changing the bankrupt social system of capitalism.

The result of these inter-elite chess moves is the strengthening of the omnipotence of national and transnational capital, the strengthening of the authoritarian regime (only with another figurehead), the suppression of civil liberties, more IMF bondage, and the final loss of independence for the country.

Ukraine after 2014 is a striking and sad example of this development.

However, in reality, another result is possible, and that is for the Maidan to change not only the president and the government, but eventually the social system itself via the overthrow of capitalism. Only thus will the root causes of social protest

It all depends on who is able to shape the agenda of the protest

In Ukraine in 2014, or in Belarus rise to the protests. That is, without in 2020, the agenda was shaped by the local nationalist and neoliberal bourgeoisie, far-right and Western-dependent "grant eaters." And now in Kazakhstan, the pro-Western opposition is talking about two ways that protests can go:

"The country can go along two paths: revolution (topple and put everyone in iail) or urgent reforms political and economic," it states in social networks.

Surely, Kazakh grant-eaters want the latter path out of the dilemma: "The second legitimate path requires the dissolution of parliament, the dissolution of the ruling Nur Otan party, the deprivation of all immunities of [former presidentl Nazarbayev and his family members, rapid political reforms by presidential decrees, registration of opposition parties and the organization of parliamentary elections on a 50/50 basis. Then we need to carry out a constitutional reform."

In fact, this plan offers the Ka-

zakhs a redistribution of power without any social change. This is what happened during the events in Ukraine.

The way things will really go in Kazakhstan depends on whether the workers of Zhanaozen and other Kazakh cities, shot down in 2011, can unite. Will they be able to create a left-wing political entity and develop their own social program, avoiding the influence of the rightwing "opposition"? This is very important, but, as we understand, it is very difficult.

However, there is no other way out. Capitalist exploitation and "market reforms" are the real causes of the Kazakh Maidan. And the movement's goal should be to eliminate these factors, not the redistribution of power among financial and political groups.

Everything that is happening in Kazakhstan today has direct analogs in Ukraine and other post-Soviet countries. And since social problems in Ukraine have not disappeared, but only intensified during the post-Maidan regime, we are also facing new popular uprisings.

Like it or not, the Maidan will objectively arise – because neither the parliamentary way nor elections can solve social contradictions.

The main thing is that it must be a social Maidan – a social revolution, which cannot be confused with its political imitations in the interests of the imperialists and oligarchs.

We cannot go on living as we do today. But we don't need market reforms, we need social change.

Translated by Greg Butterfield Source: Liva.com.ua

'U.S. claims of Russian threat to Ukraine are groundless'

By Dmitry Strauss

The following interview with Struggle- La Lucha co-editor Greg Butterfield was originally published by the website Ukraina.ru.

Dmitry Strauss: Greg, Russia has raised the issue of nonproliferation of U.S. and NATO missile strike systems near its borders. This topic will be discussed by Russia with NATO and the United States in the coming days. In your opinion, how legitimate is this point of view of Russia?

Greg Butterfield: I believe Russia's position is completely valid and correct. The unbridled growth of the U.S.-dominated NATO military alliance over the last three decades is a threat to Russia and its allies, and one of the greatest threats to peace in the world. The growth of NATO has meant not just the spread of Western troops and weaponry in eastern and central Europe. It has also meant the ascension of governments like those in Poland, Hungary, Ukraine and the Baltic States, that look to the fascist collaborators of World War II as their example.

President Putin and the Russian government have consistently spoken about the danger inherent in NATO's integration of Ukraine the last major "domino" on Russia's western border. The situation has been precarious ever since the U.S.backed coup in 2014 brought a farright regime to power that nurtures openly fascist elements who eagerly desire war with Russia.

In the final days of the Soviet Union, when the Gorbachev government withdrew support from the USSR's socialist European allies, the U.S. pledged not to expand NATO to the east or threaten Russia and other post-Soviet states. Of course, Washington never honored this pledge. Republican and Democratic administrations alike have consistently betrayed that promise and steadily increased the danger of another devastating war in Eurasia.

DS: The U.S. and NATO talk about Russia's "aggressive plans" with regard to Ukraine as their reason for the placement of missile strike systems. Russia says it has no such plans, and explains that the concentration of its troops near the Ukrainian border coincides with its right to place its troops in its own territory the way it likes. Which argument is more convincing?

GB: The claims by the U.S. and NATO of a threatened Russian "invasion" of Ukraine are completely baseless. They are not taken seriously by any knowledgeable person. Unfortunately, the workers and general population in the West are denied that knowledge. This is the greatest challenge facing the anti-war movement here. U.S. officials expect the lack of objective information and constant beating of war drums in the capitalist media to convince the masses of people that Russia is a threat to people here. They are pursuing the same kind of war propaganda against China.

Since the Maidan coup in 2014, Washington and its puppets in

Ukraine have repeatedly tried to provoke a situation where Russia would be forced to intervene to protect the population of the Donetsk and Lugansk republics. In the West, where the legitimacy of the Donbass republics has never been acknowledged, such a defensive and humanitarian action by Russia would be portrayed as an act of aggression that justifies NATO intervention.

So far, the governments and militaries of Russia and the Donbass republics have managed to skillfully deflect these provocations. The current campaign in the West to convince the populace that a Russian invasion of Ukraine is imminent, which started two months ago, is the most dangerous and sustained since 2014.

DS: What do you think is the reason for the conflict between Russia and Ukraine and Russia and the United States? Is it the geopolitical repartition of the world? Is it aggression of Russia? Is it an outdated approach of the United States to current world events?

GB: The conflict stems directly from the destruction of the Soviet Union 30 years ago. When socialism was overthrown and the Soviet republics split up, Washington and Wall Street expected the entire region to quietly become "banana republics" of the West. For the first decade under Yeltsin, it seemed this would be the case. But the rise of an independent-minded capitalist oligarchy in Russia, represented by the Putin administration, put a wrench into U.S. plans.

Even today, two decades later, the U.S. ruling class and its political establishment cannot reconcile themselves to the existence of a sovereign Russia, Belarus and Donbass, whether capitalist or socialist.

DS: Why do you think there is such a tense political situation in the world? How close do you think we are to a war? Or is it just an external impression, but in fact everything is as usual now, with no especially deep troubles?

GB: The danger of war is growing. The unending drive of the world capitalist economy for greater profits engenders war between nations and states. This is especially true of the U.S., whose global economic and military hegemony is constantly being eroded. To keep their fragile grip on power, the U.S. capitalists are driven to increasingly dangerous actions.

It's clear that the powers in Washington will never reconcile themselves to Russia's independent existence. Sooner or later, war will break out — unless there is significant movement toward social change in the West. That means a revolutionary struggle for socialism by the working class and oppressed peoples, in solidarity with the countries that value independence and sovereignty.

In the meantime, Russia, China and other countries are wise to take strong measures to defend themselves.

Source: Ukraina.ru

MLK Day organizers say: 'NO COPS in commemoration'

Continued from page 1

tragic death was caused by a stray bullet from a Los Angeles Police Department military assault weapon fired in a crowded store.

"We can't let Dr. King's message of social justice, against war and poverty, be corrupted by those who have shown no remorse and are dedicated to maintaining their murderous assault and war on the people of South Central. We cannot honor and enable them in a parade that is supposed to fight against injustice," said Jefferson Azevedo of the Harvard Boulevard Block Club, the community block organization where the King Day Parade has begun year after year.

"We believe that we should have a voice in what goes on in our community," said Maggie Vascassenno, another member of the block club. "I worry every time my son drives on these streets to school or work what if he gets stopped and profiled by trigger-happy police all too willing to shoot young Black men? Imagine the insult of seeing those who've committed atrocities against us being lauded in a parade that is supposed to be about Dr. King."

Ron Gochez of Unión del Barrio spoke about the need for Black and Brown people to come together to not allow police at the event, to honor Dr.

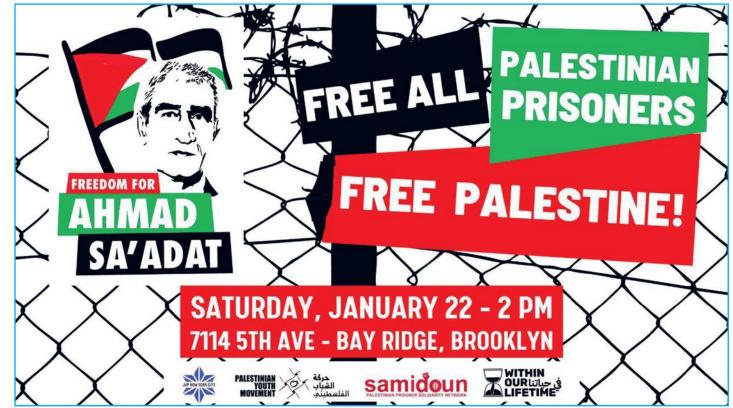
King, keep the event a family-friendly and welcoming day for the community, and allow the community to shape the activities of the day.

The Harriet Tubman Center and the coalition were the first to file for the permit application last July. This Ad Hoc Coalition for the MLK March for Social Justice is also part of the national initiative by Dr. King's

Martin Luther King III recently announced that this year is not to be a celebration, but part of the fight for social justice to demand the Biden administration not just condemn the

voter suppression avalanche aimed at especially Black voters in words but take real effective action. King III's initiative, "Give Us the Ballot," has endorsed this coalition's march.

The coalition is now in the process of making sure the LAPD honors the permit application. 🔟



Alicia Jrapko, presente!

Por Gerardo Hernández Nordelo v Graciela Ramírez Cruz

Queridos compañeros y amigos, Con profundo dolor y en nombre de su familia, comunicamos que nuestra querida compañera, hermana y amiga Alicia Jrapko, partió este 11 de enero en horas de la noche, tras luchar contra una cruel enfermedad por más de dos años. A pesar del duro tratamiento nunca dejó de trabajar en todo cuanto podía. Si algo lamentaba Alicia era no poder seguir aportando, amando y viviendo con la energía que la caracterizó siempre.

Alicia fue una gran revolucionaria argentina, hija de trabajadores que desde muy joven asumió las luchas de una generación que soñaba construir una Argentina con justicia social para el pueblo. Dijo Alicia en una entrevista...»en América Latina se forió una gran admiración por Cuba. por Fidel, Raúl, el Che y tantas otras y otros revolucionarios. En Argentina queríamos lo mismo, pero no se logró y gran parte de mi generación perdió a sus mejores hijos».

Alicia nació el 1ro de enero 1953 en Merlo, provincia Buenos Aires, creció y se educó en Córdoba, donde estudió periodismo. La dictadura militar de Argentina impuesta en 1976 desató una represión feroz hacia todos los militantes populares. Treinta mil fueron detenidos-desaparecidos. entre ellos muchos compañeros de clase de Alicia. No pudo terminar la carrera, y con la ropa que vestía, en el mismo año '76 tuvo que exiliarse.

Cada uno de los tres hijos de Alicia lleva el segundo nombre de sus compañeros desaparecidos: Gabriela Emma, Eileen Mabel y Juan Alberto.

Durante varios años vivió exiliada en México, luego se radicó en Estados Unidos, el país más difícil y a la vez el más necesario para apoyar las causas de América Latina y luchar contra el imperialismo...era difícil entender la agresión, las mentiras y los ataques contra Cuba por parte de los medios y el gobierno.

Alicia se comprometió con las luchas de los trabajadores estadounidenses y a principios de los años '90 con el trabajo solidario con Cuba a través de IFCO-Pastores por La Paz. donde colaboró estrechamente con



PHOTO: CUBA EN RESUMEN

el Reverendo Lucius Walker como su coordinadora de la costa Oeste, ayudó a organizar y promover las becas para que los estudiantes afroamericanos y latinos pudieran asistir a la Escuela Latinoamericana de Medicina (ELAM) de forma gratuita para convertirse en médicos en sus comunidades. Su labor solidaria la acercaba cada día más a Cuba; se convirtió en vocera de muchas caravanas de Pastores que recorrieron miles de kilómetros a través de Estados Unidos para contrarrestar las mentiras del gobierno estadounidense contra la isla, mientras recolectaba ayuda humanitaria como símbolo de solidaridad con el pueblo cubano. «Sabíamos que la ayuda humanitaria que llevábamos a Cuba era simbólica, pero queríamos mostrar que el gobierno de EEUU no podía bloquear la solidaridad entre los pueblos. Y queríamos mostrar que Cuba no estaba sola. La experiencia de viajar a Cuba en las caravanas de Pastores por la Paz cambió mi vida para siempre y me acercó más a Cuba

En el año 2000 Alicia estuvo al frente de la batalla por el regreso de Elián González junto su padre en Cuba, pero su trabajo fundamental se encuentra en la lucha por la liberación de los Cinco Patriotas cubanos, injustamente encarcelados por monitorear la actividad de los terroristas en los Estados Unidos contra Cuba.

y su pueblo» dijo en una entrevista.

Alicia asumió con decisión e inigualable valentía la dirección del Comité Internacional por la Liber-

tad de los Cinco en Estados Unidos, y logró que sindicalistas, líderes religiosos, congresistas, juristas, intelectuales, actores y artistas se sumarán a la campaña por la liberación de los antiterroristas cubanos Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, Ramón Labañino Salazar, Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez, Fernando González Llort y René González Sehwerert.

Desde el año 2002 hasta su libertad en 2014, sin importar los riesgos y las enormes distancias, junto a su compañero de lucha y de sueños, Bill Hackwell, visitó más de cien veces a Gerardo Hernández en dos prisiones federales de máxima seguridad, y fue el constante y afectivo apoyo de las visitas familiares.

El enorme trabajo y compromiso político de Alicia trascendió ante el pueblo cubano que le confirió varias distinciones, entre ellas la Medalla «Félix Elmuza» que otorga la Unión de Periodistas de Cuba, el Escudo de la ciudad de Holguín y la Medalla de la Amistad otorgada por el Consejo de Estado de la República de Cuba a través del Instituto Cubano de Amistad con los Pueblos -ICAP-, por su inmensa labor durante los largos años de lucha por la libertad de los

Alicia apoyó fuertemente la Revolución Bolivariana de Venezuela, el legado de Hugo Chávez y al presidente Nicolás Maduro.

No alcanzarían las páginas para describir el enorme trabajo que esta valiente mujer realizó con extraordinaria modestia, sencillez,

dignidad y fidelidad, con todas sus energías puestas al servicio del mejoramiento humano a lo largo de su preciosa vida.

Desde 2011 Alicia ha sido la copresidenta de la Red Nacional sobre Cuba (NNOC). Fue coordinadora del Comité Internacional Paz, Justicia y Dignidad de los Pueblos en Estados Unidos y fundadora y coeditora de Resumen Latinoamericano en inglés. Creó el capítulo estadounidense de la Red en Defensa de la Humanidad y fue miembro de su Secretaría General. En su último proyecto, a pesar de estar enferma, Alicia fue copresidenta del Comité Nobel de la Brigada Médica Cubana Henry Reeve, como un esfuerzo más en su incansable lucha contra el criminal bloqueo a Cuba.

Su nombre, Alicia, significa verdad. Esa verdad la llevó como bandera nuestra querida Ali durante toda su vida, la verdad del pueblo contra la injusticia, la verdad, la honestidad, la dignidad y la modestia de los verdaderos revolucionarios, capaces de darlo todo, sin otra ambición o motivo personal. El estilo de liderazgo de Alicia atraía a la gente hacia ella y las luchas que lideraba, siempre con su gran sonrisa y sinceridad, ganándose el respeto de todos.

Nos honró con su amistad y cariño, con su enorme valentía. Y nos deja a todos en esta tristeza infinita, pero con su ejemplo de vida, de lucha, de nobleza, dignidad y esperanza.

Llegue todo nuestro cariño a Gabriela, Eileen y Juanito sus amados hijos, a su entrañable compañero de vida Bill Hackwell, sus seis nietos, el más pequeño Che Simón, nacido este 5 de enero, a quien no pudo ver ni tomar en sus brazos, pero del que escuchó un audio de su grito por el futuro con una gran sonrisa; a su querido hermano en Argentina, familia, amigos y compañeros en Estados Unidos.

Jamás te olvidaremos compañera del alma, hermana más hermana y más querida.

Hasta Siempre Ali Querida! Siempre estarás Presente! Hasta la Victoria Siempre! Gerardo Hernández Nordelo y Graciela Ramírez Cruz Fuente: Cuba en Resumen

Alto a los beneficios para millonarios en Puerto Rico

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

Mientras los maestros y maestras y en general nuestra clase trabajadora entera se dirige a la indigencia por los sueldos bajos, los recortes en las pensiones, el aumento brutal y criminal en el costo de vida provocado en gran parte por la privatización de los servicios esenciales, sin mencionar el impacto de las medidas de austeridad que la infame Junta de Control Fiscal pretende imponerle al pueblo para pagarle a los acreedores buitres, vemos cómo no dan abasto las costosas residencias de lujo para los extranjeros millonarios que vuelan a Puerto Rico para gozar de este paraíso fiscal.

Los corruptos y mafiosos administradores de esta colonia han asegurado leves que liberan a los "residentes nuevos", es decir, a estos extranjeros ricos, de cargas impositivas al fisco que mientras enriquecen a los nuevos vecinos, en nada aportan a la economía del país. Este año, ya van más de 1,200 solicitudes para ampararse a estas leyes.

Pero no es solo eso, sino que aparte de la influencia negativa sobre los valores inmobiliarios que suben desproporcionadamente haciendo que los costos de las viviendas para el resto el la población sea inalcanzable para una familia boricua cuyo ingreso promedio es de \$20,000 al año, sino que quieren imponer una economía falsa de criptomonedas, haciéndole competencia al Bukele de El Salvador.

Desde luego que no hay más opciones que derogar estas leyes, quitar esta clase gobernante mafiosa y echar del país a todos estos parásitos.

Oue por fin podamos decir, junto a los pueblos soberanos el mundo, ¡Viva Puerto Rico Libre!



Una propiedad de dos acres frente al mar en Dorado Beach, Puerto Rico, se vendió por un récord de 30 millones de dólares.



Desde Puerto Rico, para Radio Clarín de Colombia, les habló Berta Joubert-Ceci.



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